



11 September 2019

Strengthening the Quality Infrastructure in the South Caucasus

Newsletter 01/2019 (January to August)

Dear Readers,

In January, PTB regional cooperation with the countries of the South Caucasus to strengthen Quality Infrastructure started its third phase. For a further three years, PTB is working together with the Armenian, Azerbaijani and Georgian metrology institutes, the political bodies responsible for Quality Infrastructure and other institutions relevant for the national Quality Infrastructure. The first newsletter gives you a short introduction into the project, informs you about the first activities of phase three and provides an outlook for the upcoming months.

About the project

The PTB South Caucasus project, financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), has a focus on the strong food sector of the region since the beginning of the regional cooperation in 2014.

Therefore, it is not surprising that the current phase targets to improve the calibrations and further metrological services relevant for the food and wine sector.

Priority laboratories in the metrology institutes NIM (Armenia), AzMI (Azerbaijan) and GeoSTM (Georgia) are supported to extend their supply of

services to stakeholders of industry and trade in the region. An efficient metrology service is an important step to allow enterprises of the region to export their products to regional and international markets. The priority laboratories are in the fields of mass, volume, temperature, humidity and chemical metrology.

Next to the work with the metrology institutes, PTB is reaching out to other relevant stakeholders to improve the quality of products in the region. PTB is consulting the relevant ministries or agencies responsible for Quality Infrastructure. Also, PTB is going to support business support organisations to better provide services to small and medium enterprises how to export. Here, a strong focus lies on chambers and associations supporting the wine sector.

By its approach, the project is working complementary to other projects like the PTB Eastern Partnership project, the GIZ project on development of the private sector and vocational training as well as to EU Twinning and World Bank projects in the three countries.

Information about the project can also be found online: www.eastern-partnership.ptb.de under *Other PTB activities*.

Activities from January to July 2019

- **Training on Proficiency Testing (SO/IEC 17043)**

From 11 to 14 March, project key expert Dr. Irene Flouda conducted a training at GeoSTM on the requirements of the international standards ISO/IEC 17043.

12 participants learned about the standard which explains the general requirements for proficiency testing (PT). During a PT, laboratories compare their performance with other laboratories. Hence, PTs are an essential element of the quality assurance and necessary for international recognition.

- **Consultation visits for Armenia**

After the “velvet revolution” in 2018 in Armenia, some of the key persons positions relevant for the national Quality Infrastructure in the public agencies and institutions were newly appointed.

PTB sent two metrology experts to consultation missions to Yerevan with the aim to support the Metrology Institute and the Ministry of Economy. In March, Mr Hratch Semerjian, former Director of the US Metrology Institute NIST, travelled to Armenia for one week. Subsequently, in May, Dr. Irene Flouda went on with the support of the Armenian metrology institute, particularly focussing on the establishment of a quality management system within NIM.

- **Quality Infrastructure Awareness Workshop**

From 13 to 15 April, stakeholders from all three South Caucasus countries met in Tbilisi to discuss general questions of Quality Infrastructure and specific questions concerning the wine sector in that area. Among others, the participants came from public institutions relevant for Quality Infrastructure, from Food Safety Agencies as well as from wine producing companies.

Strongly discussed were steps for the improvement of the national quality infrastructure in the region, developments in the EU in the field of food safety, harmonisation of standards and requirements, and many more topics relevant to export.

- **Calibration trainings in Germany**

From 20 to 24 May, three employees of NIM received a training on the calibration of balances and temperature. Facilitator of the training was the German company ZMK & Analytics GmbH in Wolfen. Here, the partners learned practically how to calibrate customer equipment and were consulted about the next steps that are necessary for NIM to

develop their own calibration services.

From 22 July to 02 August, ZMK was again host for two of our partners. This time, two experts of GeoSTM for mass and volume visited the calibration laboratories in Wolfen and learned more about the calibration of small and big volumes.

As a follow-up activity it was decided to purchase a new mass comparator within the framework of the PTB project, which allows GeoSTM to extend their range of calibration services.

- **Training on Decision Rules and Risk Assessment**

From 18 to 20 June, key expert Dr. Irene Flouda travelled again to Tbilisi to conduct a training for 23 partners (three from Armenia, two from Azerbaijan, 18 from Georgia) on Decision Rules and Risk Assessment.

With practical examples, group work and theoretical knowledge transfer, Dr. Flouda gave an understanding of how to decide on decision rules and to implement risk assessment in the day-to-day work of a metrology institute.

- **Summer school in Analytical Science, Metrology and Accreditation**

From 08 to 20 July, Quality Manager of NIM, Mr Gevorg Martoyan, participated in a 2-week Summer School on Analytical Science, Metrology and Accreditation in Lyon/France. The Summer school was organised by the Euromaster Measurement Science in Chemistry Consortium.

The program included lectures, laboratory sessions, e-courses and assignments. In the laboratory sessions, the participants developed methodology, validated, tested samples, inter-laboratory samples and quality control samples, calculated results and designed the reports.

- **Consultation visit for Azerbaijan**

From 5 to 09 August, Dr. Schnelle-Werner from ZMK & Analytics GmbH visited AzMI in Baku. His consultation focussed on the implementation of the revised version of ISO 17025, for which he did a two-day training, and on the improvement of the volume laboratory.

What is next?

- **Consultation visit for Georgia**

In October this year, Dr. Schnelle Werner will visit GeoSTM to assess their capability for electrochemical measurements, particularly pH and electrical conductivity. These measurements are, among other fields, relevant for the food industry.

- **Mass comparator and consultation for Georgia**

For GeoSTM, PTB is purchasing a mass comparator that is able to measure big volumes up to 60 litres. By that, GeoSTM can increase their range of measurement and, hence, their services offered. To train the staff of GeoSTM to work with the new comparator, Dr. Breuel from ZMK & Analytics GmbH will travel to Tbilisi as soon as the comparator arrived at GeoSTM.

- **Training on statistical tools for Metrology**

From 28 to 30 October, Dr. Irene Flouda will conduct a regional training on statistical tool that are needed in metrology institutes. The host of the training will be GeoSTM.

- **Consultation for Armenia**

After the training on statistical tools for Metrology, the staff of NIM is invited to stay in Tbilisi two days longer (31 October to 01 November) to receive an individual consultation by Dr. Irene Flouda on the creation of a Quality Management System and to write laboratory procedures

- **Consultation for Georgia**

On 8 November, GeoSTM quality manager Ms. Natalia Sidamonidze will work together with Dr. Irene Flouda on the improvement of the GeoSTM Quality Management System.

- **Consultation for Armenia**

There are plans to send a PTB expert to Yerevan in December to consult the metrology institute

- **Seminar on Export Quality Management**

On 10 and 11 December, a training for business support organisations in the wine sector will be conducted. The training will provide the chambers, associations and foundations in the wine sector with information for their members what is necessary to export their products

- **Steering Committee Meeting 2019**

On 12 December, the Steering Committee Meeting will be held in Tbilisi. Here, the developments of the past year and the activities for the upcoming project period will be discussed. It is planned to combine the meeting with a training on 13 December on internal audits.

Thank you for reading! For further information, please contact us.

With kind regards,

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Picture from the Planning Workshop at PTB Berlin in November 2018